

Research Article

Analysis of the Symbolic Meaning of the Ratib Walking Ritual in the Tradition of Ward-off Disaster in Gedung Biara Village, Seruway District, Aceh Tamiang Regency

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the symbolic meanings embedded in the walking ratib ritual within the ward off disaster tradition in Gedung Biara Village, Seruway Sub-district, Aceh Tamiang Regency, as well as the local wisdom values underlying it. The walking ratib tradition is one of the ward-off disaster rituals that is still preserved by the community of Gedung Biara Village. This ritual is held annually in the month of Safar, with the purpose of driving away evil spirits and seeking protection from misfortunes. The semiotic approach of Peirce is used to interpret symbols such as white robes, whips, torches, flags inscribed with *Lailahaillallah*, and various taboos observed during the ritual. This research uses a qualitative method with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results show that the eight symbols in the walking ratib ritual possess profound philosophical and spiritual meanings such as purity, protection, and togetherness.

Keywords: Ratib Berjalan; symbolic meaning; Peirce's semiotics; local wisdom; tolak bala tradition

1. INTRODUCTION

Tradition is a habit that has been practiced by the community for a long time, then passed on by ancestors from generation to generation, both orally and in writing. The Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language (KBBI) VI defines tradition as a custom that is carried out from generation to generation from ancestors that is still carried out and carried out in community. According to Gegana & Zaelani, 2022, traditions are hereditary customs or habits that are still practiced by the community today. In addition, they explained that the most basic thing of tradition is the existence of information that is passed down from generation to generation, both written and oral. A tradition is maintained because it has a historical foothold that has been embraced by ancestors, be it in the form of culture, beliefs, customs, languages and others (Djaya, 2020:25). Furthermore, tradition has been a part of people's lives since ancient times and has been carried out since the time of our ancestors with wise consideration of the rules and regulations that apply in society such as beliefs, culture, customary behaviors, and experiences (Oktaviana et al., 2025:22).

Tradition has the same meaning as custom, which is a custom that has a religious nature from an indigenous area. Traditions also include legal values, norms, cultures, and rules related to each other (Alifuddin & Setyawan, 2021:69). This is also in line with Salamah, et al. (2023:151) which states that tradition is a culture that exists in life that comes from ancestors or the habits that are carried out. Therefore, Haerussaleh, et al. (2022:95) Reaffirming the ability of society to create or maintain a culture is proof that humans who live in the scope of society are able to prove their ability to preserve their culture. The embodiment of culture is objects created by humans as cultured creatures, in the form of behavior and objects that are real, such as behavior patterns, social organizations, language, living tools, religion, art and others which are all aimed at helping humans in carrying out community life (Asis et al., 2021:504).

Community Aceh Tamiang still highly upholds the culture and customs inherited by its ancestors, such as in Gedung Biara Village, Seruway District, Aceh Tamiang Regency. The people of this village still carry out several traditions such as the tradition carried out on the last Wednesday at the end of the month of *Safar*. It is said that people used to believe that the month was the month of illness or bad things (Arifin, 2020:37). The tradition has such a purpose as to keep bad things away, including illness, bad luck, disasters and so on. This tradition is called of the tradition of ward-off disaster.

Ratib is *dhikr* to get closer to *Allah Subhanahuwata'ala*. Nurwati (2023:49) explains *dhikr* is an activity that involves certain body movements as a healing therapy effort. Walking *ratib* is a ritual carried out by the people of Gedung Biara Village, Seruway District, Aceh Tamiang Regency. The implementation of this *ratib* runs once a year in the month of safar, precisely on the last Wednesday, performed by walking from the beginning of entering the village to the end of the village. After that, it is welcomed by a group of other village people to the end of Tamiang, namely Pusung Kapal Village and Sungai Kuruk III. The village is a village at the end of Seruway District, Tamiang whose area is at the end of the sea. After the *ratib* was completed, the activity continued with sea feast.

Walking *ratib* is carried out at night after the congregational *Isha* prayer. *Ratib* is carried out together and is only carried out by men. *Ratib* runs very differently from sitting *ratib*, starting from its name to the steps of its implementation. This running *ratib* is not only carried out by the people of Gedung Biara Village, but also in almost all sub-districts. The local community believes that *ratib* walking has the purpose of expelling supernatural beings or evil spirits that can harm humans, animals, and plants. The sitting *ratib* only aims to ask for help and to be kept away from all forces or diseases. *Ratib* sitting is usually done as in the tradition of pushing reinforcements at rice field feasts, sea feasts, or feast at the sacred cemetery (Arifin, 2020:37). Traditions have symbols that can help the process of rejecting the bullet ritual. According to Hati & Kurniati (2022:61) symbol is something that is combined to show the meaning of something else. Furthermore, the revealed that meaning is is knotted from a word or symbol, so the meaning and the object are integrated with each other.

Symbols can be used to communicate an effective concept without having to utter words. The symbols used during the *ratib* ritual have different meanings and meanings according to cultural needs and context. The meaning of the symbols contained in the tradition of running *ratib* cannot be interpreted directly, both the meaning of the equipment and the steps during the running *ratib* process is ongoing. The ritual equipment of the walking *ratib* tradition is such as torches, whips, flags, and white clothes used by the sheikh/leader of the walking rat. Each piece of equipment has its own meaning. During the implementation of the *ratib* running, the local community must turn off all the lights of their houses so that the situation must be pitch black and the only thing that can be turned on is the light from the torch fire of the pilgrims who carry out the *ratib* and there are taboos that cannot be done during the *ratib* run. The people of Gedung Biara Village consider this ritual to be a very sacred ritual. The symbols used and the taboos in the ritual process of running *ratib* have a very high spiritual value. The symbol has elements of faith that uphold it so that the surrounding community believes in this tradition, the higher the sacred values, the more sacred the symbol.

Based on the description above, this study is interesting to be researched further for the following reasons. *First*, It is known that some people, especially the younger generation, do not know and even know the symbolic meanings of the walking rat. *Second*, ritual implementation It is feared that its implementation will be reduced if it is not introduced or inherited to the younger generation. Most of them, only carry out the ritual as the purpose of it, even from the elders or sheikhs who do not convey anything that is symbolic of the *ratib* walking (Arifin, 2020:38).

Meaning

Semantics is a branch of the field of linguistics that studies the meaning of what is said when communicating. Based on the type of semantics, it can be distinguished between lexical meaning and grammatical meaning, while based on the presence or absence of a referent in a word or lexeme, the existence of referential meaning and non-referential meaning can be distinguished, based on the presence or absence of a sense value in a word/lexeme can be distinguished between denotative meaning and connotative meaning, based on the accuracy of the meaning known to the word and the meaning of the term or general meaning and special meaning (Nafinuddin, 2020:7). This is different from what is stated by Hajaria, et al. (2022:539) who explains that Barthes's concept of meaning also has a lot to do with phenomena that occur in society or culture. Meaning does not lie in words but in humans, words are just one way of approaching meaning. The meaning can be something tangible about a symbol, but the meaning can also be something hidden. Hidden here can be interpreted as something related to feelings, emotions, and that is subjective. The meaning of this nonverbal communication is the background of culture that will require cross-cultural communication which results in a person having to understand a form of culture that is different from one's own culture so as not to interpret only one understanding. Intercultural communication is the communication of people of different ethnicities, nations, and races (Dinda et al., 2023:153).

Tradition

Traditions that have become the culture of the community are difficult to eliminate, especially in the Tamiang community. Traditions are objects and ideas that originated in the past but are still carried out today (Aisyah, 2023:1067). Furthermore, he explained that tradition can be interpreted as an activity that is carried out repeatedly so that it becomes a custom in a region. According to Hidayat & Lutfiah (2023:126) Tradition can be interpreted as part of the culture in a region. In contrast

to Malo, et al. (2022:209) which explains that the tradition inherited from the ancestors is not just a dead inheritance, but an inheritance that has a set of life values that can help the development of society. A good tradition is a habit of lifestyle that is carried out by everyone, both to themselves and with other communities by lasting from generation to generation and is considered to bring goodness (Amalia & Qayyum, 2023:31).

Walking *Ratib*

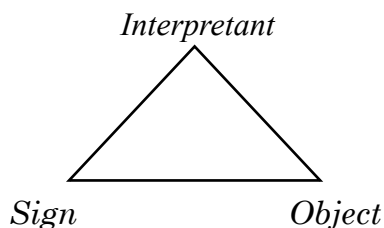
Ratib is one of the *dhikr* or praise to *Allah Subhanahuwata'ala* to draw closer and ask for *Allah's* protection. In the Great Dictionary of Indonesian Language VI (KBBI) it is stated that *ratib* means praise to God that is said repeatedly or *dhikr* to *Allah Subhanahuwata'ala* to get protection from danger. *Ratib* walking is a ritual carried out by a group of people by means of *dhikr* which is done at night after the Isha prayer together by men along the village road from the beginning of the entrance of the village to the village border. Walking *ratib* aims for expelling evil spirits from the village border to the end of the village. As for the sitting *ratib* solely ask for a request from *Allah Subhanahuwata'ala* to keep away from reinforcements (Arifin, 2020:37). Furthermore, *ratib* is a series of a number of holy verses of the *Quran al-Karim* as well as a string of *dhikr* sentences that are recited repeatedly. Worship means remembering *Allah* in which we always involve and feel the presence of *Allah* in life such as when sleeping, standing, sitting, when quiet and difficult, or when we feel alone or in peace always feel the existence of *Allah* (Khotimah, 2024:22). In contrast to Nurwati (2023:49) who explains that *dhikr* is an activity involving certain body movements as a healing therapy effort Many unwanted events occur such as disease outbreaks, natural disasters, and others, this is the will of *Allah* which has been mentioned many times in the *Qur'an* (Ritonga & Nasution, 2024:656).

Ritual

Human daily activities are also included in rituals. According to Hajaria, et al. (2022:594) ritual is a traditional ceremony or a series of sacred acts performed by the community. Each ceremony has rituals that must be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the ceremony. Furthermore, the ritual perspective sees open communication as an effort to disseminate messages, but rather the maintenance of society, a representation of shared beliefs. One of the hallmarks of ritual communication is the use of unique or distinctive symbolic language (Safitri et al., 2023:146).

Peirce Semiotics

This research applies an in-depth analysis using semiotic theory. According to Puspitasari (2021:12) Semiotics is the science of signs. Semiotics studies the rules and systems that allow these signs to have meaning. Furthermore, he explained that semiotics is a science that studies the life of signs in a broad sense both using language and non-language. Peirce said that human life is characterized by the mixing of signs and the way they are used in representative activities (Faranda, 2020:105). Pierce mentioned that meaning is generated from the chain of signs then becomes interpretants which when connected with Bakhtin's model of dialogism. any previous expression, and which results in a further response by being addressible to others (Yuwita, 2018:44).



1. *Sign*

Overall, signs are an important element in communication. A sign is a sign or anything that can be understood as a clue to something else. It can be a symbol, an image, an object, a word, or an action that has a specific meaning.

2. *Object*

In the science of semiotics, according to Peirce, an object is something that can be represented by a sign or representation and the essence of the semiotic process. The object in question can be something tangible like a physical object, or something abstract like an idea or concept.

3. *Interpretant*



According to Peirce, interpretant is an understanding or meaning produced in a person's mind when they interpret or interpret a sign and its object. So, interpretant is the meaning that results from the interpretation of signs.



4. RESEARCH METHOD



Research on the symbolic meaning of *ratib* rituals runs on the tradition of rejecting reinforcements in Gedung Biara Village, Seruway District, Aceh Tamiang Regency using qualitative research methods. According to Sugiyono (2021:318) qualitative research is a type of research based on philosophy Postpositivism, used to research on the natural conditions of objects, and researchers are as key instruments. Rijal, (2021:36) explained that this type of research emphasizes more on a detailed description of a problem and details about what situation is going on. This is also in line with Sari, et al. (2021:47) which states that this type of research was chosen because it is in line with the purpose of the research to describe the meaning. The data collection techniques used in this study are purposive sampling. Technique purposive sampling is a technique that is carried out to find and collect data sources that are related to the properties and characteristics for sampling (Lenaini, 2021:34). The key informants in this study are village elders, village officials or people who have a connection to the sampling. The researcher will dig up informants with others to get more complete information on the ritual walking *ratib*. This technique was chosen because the researcher wanted to obtain information from individuals who were most knowledgeable and experienced with the phenomenon being studied. The researcher used three data collection methods in this study, namely observation, interview, and documentation. The data analysis techniques for this research are data collection, data reduction, data analysis, and conclusion drawn.



5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Description of Research Results

Yes	Peirce's Key Elements	Information
Data: 1	<i>Sign</i>	 <p>Figure 1. Robes and Turbans</p>
	<i>Object</i>	A robe is a robe or garment in the form of a robe with panjan sleeves that is usually used by men when performing worship, especially Islam. The robes and turbans worn are predominantly white.
	<i>Interpretant</i>	The <i>Shaykh</i> as the leader of the walking rat must wear a white robe or turban, because white symbolizes cleanliness and purity. For other walking <i>ratib</i> pilgrims, they are allowed to wear white clothes but are not required. The leader of the <i>ratib</i> wears a white shirt and turban so that it can be easier to distinguish from other pilgrims.
Data 2	<i>Sign</i>	 <p>Figure 2. Regis or Whip</p>

	<i>Object</i>	<i>Regis</i> or whips is a tool made of skewers to hit and whip something, in the process of <i>ratib</i> walking the whip is one of the tools used.
	<i>Interpretant</i>	The whip in his village language is <i>regis</i> or whips, <i>regis</i> means skewer. The whip used when <i>ratib</i> is running is not just any whip, but the whip is made of several materials including palm tree skewers, green coconut skewers, and <i>juhang</i> leaves which are then tied together. This whip has the meaning of exorcising demons or evil spirits.
Data 3	<i>Sign</i>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Figure 3. Torch Flame</p>
	<i>Object</i>	Torch fire is a fire that is found on wood or bamboo which is the handle which is usually used to burn something or as a light source.
	<i>Interpretant</i>	Regarding the torch fire used in the ritual <i>ratib</i> walking, it does not have a special meaning but only as a street light because all the lights of people's houses and street lights are turned off, so only light from the torch lamp is allowed. However, the flame of this torch can be used and can also be disused.
Data 4	<i>Sign</i>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Figure 4. White Flag</p>
	<i>Object</i>	A flag is a square-shaped cloth that is used as a symbol of a country, community, institution, and others. In addition to torch fire, flags are also one of the tools used during the <i>ratib</i> process.
	<i>Interpretant</i>	An association or institution must have a symbol in the form of a flag as the identity and banner of the association. The <i>Ratib</i> ritual has its own flag which must be present during the <i>Ratib</i> process. The flag used must be white and pronounce <i>Lailahaiillallah</i> because white symbolizes cleanliness and holiness.

Data 5	<i>Sign</i>	
	<i>Object</i>	<i>Bereteh</i> is a food that must be present in the ritual of <i>ratib</i> walking. In addition, there are other foods such as fruits and other processed foods.
	<i>Interpretant</i>	The food provided in the <i>ratib</i> ritual does not only function as ordinary consumption, but also has a deep symbolic meaning as a form of alms or a form of sharing sustenance to the ritual participants. In the tradition of running <i>ratib</i> carried out by the people of Gedung Biara Village, the alms given in the form of food and drinks are believed to open the door of sustenance for the giver, as well as a form of spiritual support for the smooth running of the event.
Data 6	<i>Sign</i>	
	<i>Object</i>	The ritual of <i>ratib</i> walking is carried out in the dark. All lights are recommended to be turned off, be it lights from people's houses, roadside lights, and lights from vehicles that are passing by during the <i>Ratib</i> is taking place.
	<i>Interpretant</i>	The purpose of running is to drive away evil spirits or demons by means of <i>dhikr</i> . <i>Dhikr</i> must be carried out in the dark because it aims to enable the <i>ratib</i> pilgrims to carry out <i>dhikr</i> in a dull manner without any other disturbances.

<p>Data 7</p>	<p><i>Sign</i></p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Figure 7. Performed solely by men</p>
	<p><i>Object</i></p>	<p><i>Ratib</i> walking can only be done by men. Women are not allowed to take parts in this ritual.</p>
	<p><i>Interpretant</i></p>	<p>Pilgrims of the ritual of the <i>ratib</i> walking should only be followed by men, because this <i>ratib</i> walking is carried out at night. If women follow the <i>ratib</i>, it is feared that problems will occur because women are weak creatures compared to men. In addition, women are considered a disgrace, so it is good for women to stay at home.</p>
<p>Data 8</p>	<p><i>Sign</i></p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Figure 8. Stop at the village border</p>
	<p><i>Object</i></p>	<p>The <i>ratib</i> ritual is carried out along the road of each village without stopping until it reaches the border of the village. After that, enjoy the food that has been provided by the community.</p>
	<p><i>Interpretant</i></p>	<p>When the <i>ratib</i> ritual is being carried out, it is not to stop in the middle of the road or have not yet reached the village border. This is because the purpose of running <i>ratib</i> is to clean the village, so the term if you sweep must be in one direction.</p>

3.1.1 Discussion and Findings

The first data found was the use of white robes and turbans worn by ritual leaders, which is called the term sheikh in the local community. The Shaykh has the main role in the implementation of the running *ratib*, which is to lead the recitations of *dhikr* and direct the course of the ritual process from beginning to end. White clothes, both in the form of robes and turbans, are symbolically interpreted as a symbol of purity, cleanliness of soul, and sincerity of intention in expecting

pleasure and help from *Allah Subhanahuwata'ala*. White in this context is not just an aesthetic choice, but has a strong religious value, considering that the tradition of running on its own is an effort of the community in rejecting reinforcements, rejecting diseases, and hoping for salvation from all forms of danger that threaten the village.

In addition, the wearing of a white robe and turban also indicates that the ritual leader is a person who has gone through a certain process, has sufficient religious knowledge, and is trusted by the community in matters related to blessings and salvation. In several interviews conducted by researchers with traditional leaders and local religious leaders, it was stated that not everyone can become a shaykh because in addition to having to understand the *ratib* readings, he must also have a righteous intention and a clean heart. Thus, this symbol of white clothing not only represents the external or external aspect, but also reflects the qualities and morals of a ritual leader. The *regis* symbol in the ritual of *ratib* walking is one of the important elements that holds a deep symbolic meaning in the cultural context of the people of this village. In the local language, the *regis* refers to tools such as skewers, which are traditionally made from a combination of natural materials that have symbolic power and are believed to have a repellent effect against the evil elements. These materials include skewers from green coconut leaves, skewers from palm trees, yellow bamboo, and *juhang* leaves. All of the above materials are then tied together with a certain rope, forming a simple tool but with many spiritual meanings (interview with the village traditional leader, 2025). Furthermore, *regis* also shows the close connection between humans, nature, and beliefs. All *regis* ingredients are derived from plants available in the surrounding environment. This shows that nature is not only utilized economically, but also spiritually. According to Wahyudi, (2020:102), nature is a place where humans reproduce and live, humans cannot avoid their environment with the influence on human culture and on the contrary, nature is influenced by human culture. This traditional society often uses natural elements as an extension of spiritual communication, especially in the context of self-protection and community. Therefore, *regis* is not only a ritual tool but also an ecological symbol of the harmonious relationship between humans and their environment.

The symbolic meaning of *regis* can be analyzed more deeply through Peirce's semiotic approach, which divides signs into three: icons, indexes, and symbols (Puspitasari, 2021:12). *Regis* serves as a symbol because it represents an abstract concept of protection and rejection of spiritual danger. This symbol not only refers to its physical form as a whip, but it also represents a set of values and beliefs that live in society. Each ingredient in *regis* has its own meaning, namely green coconut skewers are associated with flexibility and durability, palm oil is believed to have the power to repel negative energy, yellow bamboo symbolizes courage and steadfastness, while *juhang* leaves are believed to have magical or mystical powers in local traditions. The torch fire is one of the important elements that accompany the implementation of the ritual of running this village. This torch is usually made of pieces of bamboo filled with kerosene and equipped with a wick of cloth, then lit and carried by the participants during the procession. Although symbolically not as strong as other elements such as the white robe or *regis*, the existence of the torch still has an important value in the ritual structure, especially in terms of functionality and history. Functionally, torch flames are used to illuminate the road because this ritual is carried out at night and in the condition that the house lights and village lighting are deliberately turned off. According to several informants interviewed by the researcher, the extinguishing of the lights during the *ratib* is a form of respect for the solemnity of worship and also to create a solemn and silent ritual atmosphere. In this context, the torch flame is the only source of light that accompanies the group in walking along the village limits. Even though lighting technology is now more advanced, people still maintain the use of torches as a form of preservation of the heritage of ancestral traditions.

According to interviews with several informants, local religious traditions have many simple elements such as fire and light that are often preserved not only because of their function, but because they have historical values that shape the cultural identity of a community group. This is also true in the tradition of *ratib* walking, where the torch is a symbol of historical continuity and a form of respect for the ancestors who have passed on this practice. The white flag raised in the ritual of *ratib* walking has a strong symbolic meaning for the people in this village. Similar to the symbolic meaning of the White Robe that has been explained earlier, the color white in this tradition is understood as a symbol of purity, cleanliness of heart, and sincerity of intention in carrying out rituals. In the context of spiritual rituals, white also reflects the sincere intention of the *ratib* participants to ask Allah for protection from all forms of disturbances of spirit beings, warriors, or negative energies that are believed to roam around the village. In addition, the raising of the flag during the process is also a form of expression of divine presence that guides and illuminates the path of the pilgrims involved in the ritual.

Each group or community that is a member of the walking tradition usually has one flag as a collective identity. The flag is white and inscribed with the sentence tauhid *Lailahailallah* using a black marker, which refers to the oneness of God as the main basis of protection and safety in Islam. This sentence is not only part of oral *dhikr*, but is also presented visually as a ritual affirmation in the form of symbols. The use of this kind of flag has been going on since ancient times and is still maintained to this day. It shows the sustainability of tradition and the common awareness of the community of the importance of religious identity in their social and religious structures. The food provided in the *ratib* ritual does not only

function as ordinary consumption, but also has a deep symbolic meaning as a form of alms or a form of sharing sustenance to the ritual participants. The tradition of running *ratib* carried out by the people of this village is in the form of alms given in the form of food and drinks. This is believed to open the door of sustenance as well as a form of enthusiastic support for the smooth running of the event. This tradition is also a means to strengthen friendship between communities, strengthen social solidarity, and foster a sense of enthusiasm and involvement, especially for children who are part of the walking group.

The food served can be in the form of processed foods such as wet cakes, rice, side dishes, and various drinks such as coffee and tea, as well as in the form of raw foods such as bananas and other types of fruit. However, one type of food that is always present in every walking *ratib* is *bereteh*. It is a traditional food made from glutinous rice that is roasted until it explodes and expands like popcorn. The existence of *bereteh* has a special meaning because it is considered a symbol of simplicity and blessings. People believe that *bereteh* is a light food that contains high spiritual value, because it is made from a sacred ingredient (rice) and processed in a clean and natural way. In the local context, *bereteh* is also often identified with a symbol of abundance and as a repellent, because the sound of its explosion when roasted is considered to be able to repel evil spirits or negative energies lurking during rituals.

The lights that are turned off during the walking *ratib* are indeed one of the regulations that have been agreed upon by the community. The meaning contained in the lamp that must be turned off or carried out in the dark is that the *ratib* pilgrims can be more focused, confused, and orderly in carrying out the *ratib* so that there are no disturbances from others. The regulation of turning off the lights when the *ratib* is running has indeed been implemented since ancient times so that it is still implemented today, except in certain circumstances. If anyone violates these regulations, they will be reprimanded and can even result in possession. The traditional *ratib* ritual is only allowed to be followed by men. This is based on a local belief that sees men as figures who have greater physical strength than women. The people of this village view that the presence of women in this sacred ritual can invite risks, especially because it is believed that women are more vulnerable to supernatural influences or interference from spirit beings. Therefore, during the *ratib* process, women are prohibited from leaving the house or crossing the street until the *ratib* group has walked far enough from their living environment. This prohibition is strictly maintained in order to maintain the solemnity and smooth running of the ritual.

Walking *ratib* alone is carried out by walking along all roads in the village as a form of *ruqyah* togetherness to cleanse the village from evil spirits, spirit creatures, or negative energies that are believed to bring disease, conflict, or bad luck to humans, plants, and animals. The process is carried out in one direction, namely towards the sea because the sea is considered a place of return for all forms of mystical disturbances. This is in line with the community's belief that the sea has the power to neutralize and absorb evil energies. One of the important rules in this ritual is the prohibition of stopping halfway. All groups of pilgrims must continue to run uninterrupted until they reach a predetermined stop, usually at the village border. Stopping in the middle of the road is believed to enable evil spirits or negative energies leave behind and instead settle around the location. Therefore, the rhythm and direction of movement in the walking *ratib* are an integral part of the protection structure that is believed to be able to resist reinforcements and restore harmony in the community. One of the previous studies that discussed the symbolic meaning contained in the *ratib* ritual was based on the tradition of rejecting reinforcements conducted by research in Sungai Kuruk III Village written by Awaluddin Arifin. The results of the study discuss the symbolic meaning contained in the *ratib* ritual running in the tradition of rejecting the *bala*.

In addition to the prayer aspect, another difference lies in the implementation of a sea feast in Sungai Kuruk III Village after the *ratib* ritual is over. This feast is carried out specifically as a form of gratitude to *Allah Subhanahuwata'ala* for the safety and sustenance obtained by coastal communities throughout the year from the sea. The feast process involves the slaughter of goats and chickens, the reading of prayers together, and a banquet held on a small island located in the middle of the sea. The implementation of this sea feast is not only a mystical means, but also strengthens social solidarity and maintains the continuity of human relations with nature, especially the sea as their main source of life. More interestingly, Sungai Kuruk III Village holds the responsibility as the closing village in the entire series of walking *ratib*. All the equipment used in the ritual such as white flags, torches, and other traditional tools are handed over to this village as a final marker of the annual *ratib* cycle. Therefore, the spiritual and symbolic burden of walking in this village is considered heavier compared to other villages. This role contains a great shared responsibility for the community to maintain the sacredness of the process, including ensuring that all stages take place according to the customs that have been passed down from generation to generation.

This research raises the *ratib* ritual as the main object, a cultural ritual that is full of meaning and is still alive today in the midst of the Aceh Taming community. One of the previous relevant research is a journal written by Arifin (2020) with the title "Symbolic Meaning in the *Ratib* Ritual in Sungai Kuruk III Village, Aceh Tamiang". Although it has the same theme, this research substantively has differences in various aspects, both in terms of location, symbolic objects, theoretical approaches, theoretical approaches, or scientific contributions produced. In addition, this research also has deep and clear

differences. The presentation of different symbols, theoretical approaches, locations, and new findings, this research has a strong value of novelty and originality. This research is not a repetition of Arifin's (2020) research, but a development that expands the scope of understanding of ratib rituals in semiotic and ecological outlines.

6. CONCLUSION

This research has described the symbolic meaning contained in the *ratib* ritual running in the tradition of rejecting reinforcements in Gedung Biara Village, Seruway District, Aceh Tamiang Regency. Researchers found that symbols in rituals such as white robes and turbans, *regis* or whips, torch fires, white flags, food provided, lights turned off, performed by men, as well as taboos stopped before village borders, have a deep symbolic meaning and cannot be expressed directly. These symbols represent the spiritual, protective, and sacred values that society believes in. The researchers conducted a more in-depth analysis using Peirce's semiotic theory, which sees symbols as a system of signs consisting of icons, indexes, and symbols. From this approach, symbols such as *regis* and torches are not only analyzed from a social perspective, but can also be in terms of the structure of their deeper and more orderly meaning, including the relationship between functions, forms, and references of each element or sign. Furthermore, this study adds an ecological perspective that views that the symbols contained in rituals are not only sacred and social, but also a reflection of the knowledge of the local community. For example, the use of natural ingredients in *regis* shows a community's attachment to the environment and a cultural adaptation rooted in the relationship between humans and nature.

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